

Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing

Office of the Minister

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November 12, 2019

Dear Head of Council:

Earlier this year, our government introduced *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* as part of the **More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan** to increase housing supply, create more jobs, attract business investments and better align our infrastructure. Today, I am writing to provide further clarity on two specific provisions in *A Place to Grow* as your municipality undertakes its work to meet conformity with the growth plan by July 1, 2022. This clarity is with respect to the government's position on the municipal comprehensive review process and the policy permitting settlement area boundary expansions of up to 40-hectares outside of the municipal comprehensive review.

As you will recall, *A Place to Grow* provides municipalities with greater flexibility in local planning decision-making. Notably, *A Place to Grow* helps ensure intensification and density targets better reflect growth rates, local realities and market conditions; allows municipalities to make changes to their settlement area boundaries more quickly and easily, while continuing to provide protection for employment and agricultural lands as well as natural areas; and provides policies that direct intensification around transit to increase the supply of housing and jobs near transit hubs.

To ensure that we continue to meet our commitment to build more homes faster, our government has taken the position that municipalities may choose to take a phased approach to their municipal comprehensive review through *multiple* official plan amendments. We recognize that one size does not fit all and that the current and potential changes in provincial and regional planning frameworks can make it challenging to do planning in a timely, efficient, and effective manner. As such, providing municipalities with the choice of phasing their municipal comprehensive review or achieving conformity as part of one single new official plan or plan amendment is responsive to the needs of local communities.

In addition to the flexibility provided in the approach to the municipal comprehensive review, our government has also taken the position that, so long as they meet

applicable policies in *A Place to Grow*, there is no limit to how often a municipality can undertake the settlement boundary expansions of up to 40-hectares that take place outside of the municipal comprehensive review. The up to 40-hectare expansion, which can either be municipally or privately initiated, supports our government's growth management objectives of allowing communities to develop in ways that expand housing and economic opportunities while maintaining protections for our environmentally sensitive areas, including the Greenbelt, cultural heritage assets, and key employment and agricultural lands.

While there are several other requirements in *A Place to Grow* that support our increased housing supply objectives, I wanted to bring clarity to these two specific planning provisions given their immediate impact on getting supply online faster. These policies, along with policies that allow for employment area conversions that facilitate the introduction of residential uses, provide opportunities for local decision makers to put forward plans that address housing supply goals in a timely manner. By ensuring that municipalities do not have to wait until the next municipal comprehensive review to implement planning changes, our government aims to get shovels in the ground quicker and to have development happen sooner.

It is anticipated that additional information on the implementation of *A Place to Grow* will be forthcoming. In the interim, if you have any questions and/or concerns, please feel free to contact Cordelia Clarke Julien, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ontario Growth Secretariat at cordelia.clarkejulien@ontario.ca. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark

Minister

c: Stephen Hamilton, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Honourable Steve Clark,
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